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*Some Reflections On the Paper Delivered unto the Sheriffs of London, By James Holloway at the time of his Execution.*

**I**T cannot be otherwise than matter of astonishment to all Loyal and Ingenuous men, to behold the unquiet and restless Principles of too many amongst us, who think it not enough to broach and spread a bout their Doctrines of disobedience, but also to endeavour to debauch the Palates and Understanding of their Pupils, so that the Poyson they deliver may be esteemed as the wholesomest Food they receive; of such men, and such Principles, we have lately met remarkable instances, A Horrid Conspiracy hath been afoot, a Conspiracy to ruine the Government we live under, to destroy the best of Kings, and the best of Religions, and this apparently proved by such pregnant Testimonies, that infidelity it self might have been silenced, the Judgment of God hath overtaken many of the Conspirators, and Justly have they suffered for the same; yet hath the impudence of those men been so extravagant, that they have, and do endeavour to Redicul and Sham the same, and in plain words tell the world, *( a ) the Plot is lost here except you find it in the Country amongst the Abhorers and Addressers.* It will not therefore be amiss if we examine the Confession of the last sufferer, who, at the brink of death, when his Soul was ready to launch forth into the Ocean of Eternity, at the prospect of Judgment and immortality was before him, freely and voluntarily asserted his knowledge of those Crimes he came to suffer for, and tho' we needed nothing of this nature to corroborate the other proofs thereof, yet as the same were the words of a dying man, they may prevail on the misled and ignorant, to take of that prejudice they have to long lain under; and satisfy the whole world, that those who pretend the greatest Innocency and deceive mankind with their false and specious pretences of asserting the Liberties and Properties of the people, are the very men, that in the same breath, at the same time intended the greatest Invasions thereupon:

In order to which examination, I shall only take to pieces that Paper Mr. *Holloway* delivered at the time of his Death to our present Sheriffs; wherein he begins,

*To stop the Mouths, &c. of all Pamphleteers and News-Scriblers, who have done more prejudice to his Majesty and Kingdoms by their impudent endeavours to sham all Plots and to fill the Country with false News than they will be ever able to retrieve and to satisfy all I leave behind me I thought good to draw up a short account of what I knew of the late Protestant Plot, &c.*

Herein the Reader may observe a plain Confession of the Plot in gross, the *Protestant Plot* as the sufferer termed it, and his Reason for publishing what he knew



knew thereof, to stop the mouths of such virulent and impudent Scriblers who endeavour to sham the same, and put a false gloss upon such black and Tremendous Actions, nor is he at all out in his opinion, that such as these do a greater injury to the King and Kingdom than they are or can be in any Capacity to retrieve; for if we consider how great a Providence was seen in the discovery of the Nations worst and most inplecable enemies in the midst of their horrid and abominable Contrivances, all endeavours to stifle the same must needs be impious in the highest degree, for hereby the Government is slandered as unjust and cruel for shedding the Blood of such who have lawfully suffered in the same; Rebellion is covered with the name of innocence; the sentence of the Law duly executed is called murder, Vice wears the mask of Vertue, The Wolf is got into sheeps cloathing, and none can discern his Enemy in the disguise of Friendship: tho' the Pit be dug to betray us, we are led on in a pleasant and enticing Path, without fear or apprehension of our danger, till the moment of our Ruine confronts our Presumption. But farther proceeds the Sufferer, to the particulars of his concern in the said Plot, wherein he ascribes his first knowledge thereof to his Publick Spirit, which led him to attend Affairs beyond that capacity wherein he had been bred, in the following of Parliaments for the perfecting some designs on foot in order to the improvment of the Linnen Manufacture, &c. in which I would observe, That men, when they leave the Calling that Providence hath allotted them, and would soar into a sphere above them, they very rarely miss the fate of *Dedalus*, their Molten Wings deceive them, and their fall to late gives them notice of their ruine. And here adds he in this Attendance upon that Parliament, *The more I knew the more I was desirous to know, and did by some Scriblers and News-mongers constantly know most of the publick affairs that were acted, which they undertook to represent according to their own humour; many actions being represented very illegal, much against the Protestant interest in favour of Papists, &c. Shamming the Popish Plot upon the Protestants, abusing the Rights and Priviledges of the Subjects, the truth of which I leave to the judgment of all; but hearing many such like things was easily prevailed with to be concerned in the Plot, according as it was proposed to me, &c.*

When the Devil hath a work to do, he usually imployes such agents as may best deceive the incautelous, and accordingly so disguises them, and puts such words into their Mouths, that you would take them rather for Angels of Light than Ministers of the infernal Lord. The Lying Prophets came in the name of God with as much Zeal in their mouths, and appearing Truth, as those by God himself appointed; nor in like manner was the late faction any thing cautious



of cloaking their pretences in the Livery of Heaven, Zeal was in their mouth, and Treason in their hearts; Property and Liberty was their cry, Slavery and Bondage their design; True Protestant Reformation their pretence, Heresy and Schisme, the Destruction and Ruine of the Established Religion and Government their last aim; and in short, knowing they could never perpetrate their bloody and worse than savage intentions, if the same were brought in naked, they Cloathed their Deformities in a Presbyterian Jump, and made Religion the Pander to usher in the Cheat. But further he goes on, *About July 1682. I met (says he) a person who gave me an account touching the Election of Sheriffs of London, &c. and the illegality thereof as he represented the same; whereupon the Protestant Gentry were resolved to remedy what was designed by an insurrection in several parts of the Kingdom; and if possible, to get the King off from his Evil Councillors, &c. That it should begin at London, Bristol, Exeter, Taunton, Chester, York, New Castle and therefore desired we might consider how it might be managed in Bristol, which they did and conclude, that Bristol with about Three hundred and fifty men might be easily surpris'd, &c.*

*in April, says he, I heard of another design against the King and Duke of York as they were to come from New market, &c. When I heard it, I declared my abhorrence of any such thing, I was confident none in our parts would be for it.*

Here he confesses he did know of this design and tho' he would be thought ingenuous, in his abhorrence thereof, yet too much of the Phanatical Leven posses'd him; why did he not reveal it? Can that man be said to abhor a Crime, that when the same is discovered to him conceales it, and Closes it in his breast till the same is perpetrated on his Neighbour? much more in this case, the Life of His Most Sacred Majesty and that of his Royal Brother were designed, the very Arms bought and ready that were to effect the same; the men, the manner, the place, and every circumstance agreed on, the Hellish wickedness in prospect of performance; the performance so execrable in it self, that words are not significant enough to express the horror of it, nor imagination comprehensive to fathom its guilt; and yet to cover this to lodge it quietly in his breast, and yet own, or brag of his abhorrence of it, is Hypocrisy against the Devil, and can admit of no excuse. But further he says:

*The general Design for the insurrection was carried on by others, who tho' they made a great stir in the Nation, trying the inclinations of people, and had treated with the Scotch and Irish as I heard; who were to be ready at the same time, yet never came to any resolution as to any time or method before all was discovered; tho' they had been Eleven Months contriving it from the time I first heard it. This I hope will be enough to satisfy all people there was a P. L. O. T.*

Had we had no other Proof, surely this must, beyond all doubt, satisfy the whole



whole world of the truth of these Designs; yet can I not but observe how nearly the same agrees with every part of that Evidence that hath been before given in at the Tryals of such who have deservedly suffered Death for the same, the like previous complaints you were by them acquainted with, the Magistracy illegally chosen, Popish Councils and Ministers about the King, Arbitrary Government coming upon us, Property and Liberty invaded Shaming the Popish Plot, &c. And therefore upon these grounds ( say they ) the Rebellion was intended, and the Death of the King and His Royal Highness designed, and all this and you see is but a counterpart of this Gentlemans last words; so that though all good Men never doubted the veracity hereof before, yet now certainly the worst can never have Impudence enough to go about to evade it. When the late *Jesuits* who were executed in the Popish Plot deny'd their concern therein, & in the words of Dying Men asserted their innocency, it was objected against them, that the Religion they had imbibed allowed them for the good of that Church (whereof they were Members) to disown what they came to suffer for; I shall not dispute the Validity or truth of the charge, but sure I am amongst Protestants, There is no such tenent, to allow men in their last hours to speak what is false on any pretence whatsoever, much less to give them Liberty to charge themselves and others with what they never did or were guilty of.

But to proceed, this Gentleman goes on, *The Arguments* ( says he ) *before-mentioned, with many others to the same Effect, not only soon prevailed with me, but made me indeed think it my duty to do what I could for my King and Countries safety, being then fully perswaded, that not only Popery, but Arbitrary Government was intended; not then considering, ( as ) I have since considered, how much Bloodshed it might have caused in the Nation; for then I thought all would have been ended in a little time, supposing things to be as to me was reported: But I now declare my Hearty Sorrow for my yielding thereto, & acting therein; ( this I can safely say, I was not for taking away the Kings Life, but wholly for his Preservation ) yet am satisfied that it might have caused very much Bloodshed in the Nation, and am glad it did not take Effect. And am satisfied it was a great Sin against God, &c.*

What this Gentleman gives to palliate his offence, and make that a Duty as he calls it, which was his crime, is so far from giving any colour thereunto, that let any sober man observe it, and he will conclude it rather a Sophistical aggravation thereof. *I thought it my duty, says he, to do what I could for my King and countrys safety.* A specious pretence, but pray mark him, an insurrection was to be made, the Peace we had so long enjoyed, and was then likely to enjoy could they have been quiet, was intended to be disturbed. We neither  
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heard of Warrs nor Rumours of Warrs, but from themselves; the King was to have been seized, his Friends taken from him under the title of *Evil Counsellors*, and yet this Consistent with the King and Kingdoms safety, nay, the Life of his Sacred Majesty was threatned, his Royal Brother to share the like Fate, and this known (as above) to the Prisoner, and all the while he and his Brother Phanaticks doing their Duty for their King and their Country. Oh! but *Po-pery and Arbitrary Government was intended*. I know not in case of their designs going forward, what security we should have had against Popery, tho' I am apt to beleive it had been the greatest help to the introduction of it, under the Common disturbances that would have ensued, that they themselves could have wish'd for; as for the Latter, I may be more certain, that nothing could have possibly followed the same, if ever they had prevail'd, but the most Tyrannical and slavish Government in the World; for that Kingdom whose Foundation is in Blood, must have its Superstructure in Slaughter; and nothing but Devastation and Ruine of the best, at the will and pleasure of the worst, can ever be expected therein. An instance whereof too many of us too fatally remember in the late Usurpers days, our Channels were filled at the Expence of our Dearest and most Loyal Veins; the Scaffolds, besides that of the best of Kings, was almost every Month stain'd with some or other of our Nobles Blood; our Estates at the Mercy of a Tyrant who thought it crime enough for any man to think him so, and as if he could have seen into their Brest, though their Lips ne'r uttered the same, that their Lives were the price of their inexpressed Loyalty: and this is all good men might behold, as the end of the said Designs of our late Plotters, had the same taken effect; and which is the next words, our sufferer takes notice of *not considering then how much Blood &c.* But this he confesses brought him to a sorrow for his intentions, and he owns it before all the world; *That he then was glad it did not take Effect*, and owns it as a Sin against God Almighty, *not only in distrusting his Providence, but taking his Work out of his Hands*; and certainly, if we consider that God hath placed our great Magistrate over us to be obey'd, and hath left himself only his Superiour to call him to account for his actions in the Throne he hath Seated him, each irreverent word, or disobedient thought to this his Substitute on Earth, is a Crime against Heaven, how much more then would it be, to strive with these Saints, these Protestants, Reformers, and true Christians, though indeed the worst of Rebels, to dethrone him. Could they plead in excuse, that as he is the best of Kings, he was the worst of the worst of Tyrants; as he is the most merciful amongst all the Princes in the World, he was the most Savage and cruel; as he rules and governs in the highest and exactest Justice, distribut-

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ing to every man his right, the Sword was his only Arbiter ; and the Portion of every mans inheritance, the right of his pleasure ; yet these were not enough to Justify a Rebellion, to such a Prince we are bound by all Laws Humane and Divine to submit. But happy is it for us, we have as much reason to obey him for his goodness, as we are bound to do the same in Duty ; and may all those that think otherwise, meet a reward for their Crimes, proportionable to the same. But our sufferer, after his Confession aforesaid, comes and tells you, *that he was not, nor would be compelled to say what he did, but that it was his Resolution to declare all he knew concerning the Plot, and also do what in him lay to prevent all Plottings for the Future, and to put an end to the Heats, &c.* and afterwards says, *when I gave my Confession, I stood not upon terms of pardon, being confident if Truth will merit Mercy from the King, I should have his pardon, and that it was the only way to gain Mercy with God.* And afterwards, *I Repent not my Confession, and could I discover more, I would do it willingly, though I find not Mercy with Man.* So that upon the whole, here is a Ingenious Confession of the said Phanatical Plot, & a proof against all the Cavils of the worst of men. that the same was not a slight & ill grounded design, but laid deep, and intended against the bottom of the Government, against the life of the best of Kings and Brothers, and in short time against Monarch and Monarchy it self, whom God grant long Preservation unto.

FINIS



